



**Community Meeting to Consolidate Rosario Castellanos Elementary School  
and Lazaro Cardenas Elementary School  
January 16, 2018  
Castellanos Campus 2524 South Central Park Avenue  
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

**CPS Staff in Attendance:**

Cristina Carreto, Minerva Garcia-Sanchez, Dr. Jeremy Feiwell, Carmen Medina, Marisela Ramirez, Ana Diaz, Diane Gracia, Alex Cortez, Sonia Castro, Julissa Cruz, Alex Cortez, William Valentin, Jose Flores, Carmone Alexander, Kevin Tyson, Aaliyah Gibson, Ines Castaneda, Joanne Shaw, Anna Szuber and Jerry Taylor.

**CPS Presentation**

Cristina Carreto opened by providing a welcome and advising that this is the second meeting to hear comments from the community regarding the proposal to consolidate Castellanos and Cardenas. She advised that the meeting will be conducted in Spanish and informed that hearing devices are available for those that need to hear the meeting in English. She informed the community that representatives from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS), the Office of Language and Cultural Education (OCLE), the Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS), and Talent will be available for 30 minutes to answer questions after the meeting.

She presented meeting logistics and reminded the community that the 2 hour long meeting will consist of a short presentation on the school action and public comments. She informed that interpreters are available and she encouraged attendees to register. She offered the public to make comments at [transitions@cps.edu](mailto:transitions@cps.edu) and informed that the entire proposal for the action is available at [www.cps.edu](http://www.cps.edu). She reminded attendees that the public hearing for the proposal will be held on Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at Central Office.

Minerva Garcia-Sanchez provided a welcome and an overview of the proposed action to consolidate Castellanos and Cardenas. She went over the legal process and important dates. She advised that in February, 2018 or later, CPS will make recommendations to the Board after the community meetings and hearing are held. She explained that the Board may vote at that time or later.

She informed that the consolidated school will operate from 3 different facilities serving the same grades as they currently serve, K-8. She assured no staffing impact on Castellanos staff, current positions through OLCE will remain in place for SY2018-19,

consistent staffing of counselors and case managers will remain the same for SY2018-19, and safety technology will review and enhance the current security system at Castellanos.

She advised that academic planning teams will plan curriculum to ease transition. She informed that support will continue to be provided by the Office of Social and Emotional Learning and ODLSS representatives, and that STLS students will continue to be supported in the transition.

She informed that prior to the SY2017-18, the Castellanos LSC voted to request that the principal of Cardenas serve both schools, and on August 22, 2017, the principal began serving both schools. She further informed that on November 2, 2017, both LSCs requested full consolidation of both schools. She assured that attendance areas will be unaffected as both schools serve the same area.

### **Public Comments**

Rosio Rivera: Parent, member of LSC at Castellanos, and representative of BAC and No Child Left Behind. She expressed that she is in support of the consolidation.

Diana Martinez: Parent and active community member. She expressed that she would like to know more about the plan to consolidate. She stated that she has had conversations with community members who have experienced consolidation proposals in the past and she heard that they were unsuccessful. She stated that she has colleagues with her who are seeking answers on what is happening, what is going to happen, and how it is being worked on.

Carmen Medina: Assistant Principal at Castellanos for 6 years. She stated that she has been at CPS for 20 plus years. She stated that this is a very good organization with great communication with students. She expressed that staff has created an environment where students feel safer but that the students have many questions regarding the consolidation. She stated that based on her experience, she knows that Castellanos/Cardenas are going to work very well together and that it will show at the end of the year with the SQRP.

Fernanda Mora: Parent of student at Castellanos. She expressed her gratitude that the principal accepted and decided to serve Castellanos. She stated that the last principal left the position and they had to find a principal who could give the kids an education. She stated that the kids are now going to be in better hands.

Maria Guadalupe Rubio: Parent of student at Castellanos. She stated that with the new principal supporting both schools, she is in support of the consolidation because it has a Level 1 status. She stated that Cardenas has it thanks to the principal and his team. She is looking forward to everyone working together as a team, including Ms. Medina and Ms. Ramirez. She stated that she is going to continue supporting them.

Rosio Garcia: Community member and part of ENLACE Chicago. She stated that she was at the last meeting and has questions about what this consolidation means beyond parents who are expressing support and the LSC's approval. She stated that Jenner and Ogden had the proposal for consolidation for two years which included parent committees, teachers and members of the community who met weekly to create a transition plan that represented the needs of students and parents. She stated that there is a request for 1.8 million for the consolidation and she wants to know why not the same at Cardenas/Castellanos. She stated that there are no meetings being held to talk more about what it means to consolidate and the long term consequences. She stated that she is supporting the parents and what CPS is doing but she has concerns beyond what is in the record.

Leticia Camacho: Parent and Castellanos LSC member. She expressed her support of the school and principal. She has heard comments regarding kids from Cardenas not being prepared to be part of Castellanos but her goal is to get rid of those kinds of concerns. She stated that there is much more that parents can do to make the school better.

Yolisma Malacara: Parent of student at Cardenas. She expressed that she is in support of the action. She stated that this is going to be a good change because Castellanos is a Level 2 school and Cardenas is a Level 1 school and the consolidation could lead to positive academic change. She stated that she also does not want to hear the negative comments about Cardenas kids. She wants the best education for her child and all of the children under the new administration.

Paloma Godinez: Teacher at Castellanos. Expressed concern about SY 2018-19 and that there won't be a change in money. She stated that she wants to make sure that there is enough money years down the road for case managers, nurses, and clerks.

Diana Martinez: Parent and active community member. She stated that she wants to know why the school was left without a principal. She stated that she is worried about the community she lives in. She stated she wants to know the reason why another principal wasn't sought after immediately. She wants to know all the options that were looked into.

Ms. Rodriguez: Parent. She stated that when she heard about the consolidation proposal, she wondered if it was going to work. She stated that she knows they are going to save money because only one principal will be paid a salary. She asked if the money from the other salary will be returned to the school or if it will be lost.

Rosio Garcia: Community member and part of ENLACE Chicago. She stated that the transition plan raises a lot of questions and concerns that parents have. She believes that this process has been very quick and that there are a lot of concerns about CPS Leadership and the investigation the state is doing. She stated that there is concern about how the community can confide in them. She stated that she wants the

community to consider what else is needed and wanted because CPS is going to be saving money off the backs of students.

Maura Murtaugh: Teacher at Castellanos. She stated that the primary purpose of the consolidation is to improve the education of the children. She stated that Cardenas' kids have made a lot of progress. She stated that Dr. Feiwell, along with staff, are working on ensuring improved education. Other schools that have went through consolidations have had to address attendance boundary changes but that is not a struggle at Castellanos/Cardenas. She stated that the budgeting question is fair and wants to know if there will be increments due to greater amounts of kids. CPS should be listening to the voice of the parents who have kids at Cardenas and Castellanos.

Sandra Mora: Parent of a student at Castellanos and employee of CPS for 10 years. She stated that she has worked at Castellanos and at Cardenas. She stated that she has seen that both councils prioritize kids which is the same priority that the principal has. We can achieve what's best for the students. Their future is here, with our community. We don't want them to go to other communities where they have money.

Rosario Rivas: Parent. She stated that all the parents present are attending the meeting because they want the best education for their children. She stated that she is concerned about there being too many kids for one principal. She would like another principal.

Carmen Medina: Assistant Principal at Cardenas. She stated that she has been part of Cardenas for 26 years. She is in support of the unification. She stated that she has stayed at Cardenas because she knows that they are doing good work. She stated that students will be better prepared to go to high school. She does not think it is a good idea to compare what is happening in other places or what is happening with CPS leadership.

Fernanda Mora: Parent of a student at Castellanos. She stated that she is sad by some of the comments she is hearing. She stated that she believes that the principal should stay and that he is capable of serving all of the students. She stated that the principal they have is the one she wants. She is in support of the consolidation.

Catalina Rivas: 12 year LSC member of Castellanos and Cardenas. She stated that Cardenas is a welcoming school. The name has nothing to do with the school, it is the kids that matter most. The safety of our kids is what matters the most.

Gabriela Avondro: Parent of students at Cardenas and Castellanos. She stated that she is happy with the principal and with Ms. Ramirez. She stated that she values communication and that she has good communication with them. She is in support of the consolidation.

Elizabeth Hueramo: Parent of students at Cardenas and Castellanos. She stated that when she heard about the unification she was very happy because they feel it's a community, a family. She stated that the principal and teachers know the kids by name. She stated that she is concerned about the percentage of kids in the math club in Cardenas and in Castellanos which is shown on the CPS website. She stated that she wants to make sure that students are going to receive the same kind of education and curriculum to reach higher levels of learning.

Delia Pantoja: Parent of students at Cardenas and Castellanos. She stated that she and her children are very happy. She stated that she believes in the principal and that this is going to be a great change.

B.A.: Student at Castellanos. She stated that she has reviewed the pros and cons of the consolidation. The pros are that we get to meet a lot of students from K-8. The cons are that I can't graduate from Castellanos. I feel like that is what's stopping me from wanting this whole thing to come together. She went over the history of the name of the school, which was Burnes, and then converted to Castellanos. She stated that her mom and aunt attended Burnes and that they went through the same problem that she is facing now. She expressed her confidence in Dr. Feiwell and that he will make things work. She stated that the consolidation will give her a bigger family and that she is happy for change.

Catalina Rivas: 12 year LSC member of Castellanos and Cardenas. She stated that she was involved in the selection of the last principal and that it was not easy. She stated that the children need a strong support system so they are able to share any problems they have.

Fernanda Mora: Parent of a student at Castellanos. She stated that she is thankful to the prior principal and does not believe that criticizing gets people what they want. She stated that her child graduated from Castellanos. She shared that her child was accepted to a top rated high school. She stated that she is in support of the Little Village community. She stated that she is not concerned with CPS problems and that she is not interested in money. She is interested in the kids having a great place to learn. She thanked the principal.

Cristina Garcia: Staff member at Castellanos and Little Village resident. She stated that she is happy that she is able to give back to the community where she was born. She is pleased that she will be able to work with Cardenas. She stated that she does not believe there are any misunderstandings and that the students are doing well and are happy. She stated that they have a good team and that the principal has done a great job at being transparent and creating goals.

Gabriela Diceno: Parent of a student at Cardenas. She is in support of the consolidation. She stated that if they keep the same principal but the name changes, it will not make a difference. She expressed her support of the parents, the principal, and the teachers.

Marisela Ramirez: Assistant Principal of Cardenas for 12 years. She stated that she has been part of Cardenas school for 20 years and was born and raised in Little Village. She stated that she has seen the great work the principal has done and that he puts the interest of everyone in the school first. She stated that while she is prepared to leave to become a principal, it is because of Dr. Feiwell that she is ready. She stated that they have a great team there. She stated that she has seen different leaders at Castellanos and that this is their opportunity to help the kids and the parents. She talked about the great work done by Dr. Feiwell and Carmen. She thanked the parents for their trust.

B.A.: Student of Castellanos. She stated that she would like to be offered more extracurriculars. She stated that she is involved in many extracurriculars and that she is class president for her class. She will be meeting with Dr. Feiwell soon to talk about what the students want for classrooms. She stated that she wants to make sure extracurriculars are added because it helps students get into the high schools they want to go to. She stated that adding additional programs will help students graduate as great people.

Lucila Morales: Aunt of students at Castellanos and a community member. She stated that she graduated from Castellanos when it was still Burnes. She stated that she did not have the best experience at that time and that her education was not at the top. She stated that she is excited to see the consolidation happen and is happy that Dr. Feiwell will teach her family members.

Julia Vega: Member of LSC for 14 years. She stated that the moms in the LSC are doing a great job. She stated that the moms believe that the consolidation is the best situation for their kids. She congratulated the student who has been making public comments and she sees the student as a great leader.

Leticia Camacho: Parent and Castellanos LSC member. She stated that she has faith in Dr. Feiwell, Ms. Medina, and Dr. Ramirez. She stated that she remembers asking Dr. Feiwell years ago about consolidating the schools but his answer was no. She stated that Castellanos has been on probation for many years. She thanked Ms. Medina and the principal for getting Castellanos off of probation. She stated that it has been a pleasure to work at the school.

Dr. Feiwell: Principal of Cardenas and Castellanos. Dr. Feiwell welcomed everyone to Castellanos and thanked attendees for participating. He stated that everyone's opinion matters and that everyone has great questions. He stated that he understands why there would be some skepticism. He stated that during his 15 years of service at Cardenas, and now his year of service at Castellanos, he has always put the kids first. He mentioned his B.A.'s comment about their goal for kids to have great careers and great lives. He stated that before there was a great disconnect between the two schools, but that it is important to move past that and focus on the future of Cardenas and Castellanos. He asked that everyone trust him because they have outstanding staff, teachers, and support personnel. He stated that he understands the concerns about the

budget and positions. He stated that he is not going anywhere and that his job as principal is to ensure that he is budgeting appropriately to ensure that everyone has what they need. He ensured that the staff is a team and that they will be putting the kids first. He thanked everyone and looks forward to working with everyone to make sure they are the best people socially, emotionally and academically.

Public comment start time: 6:10 p.m.

Public comment end time: 7:58 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.